



Thought from The SPOT (Social work & Psychologist Office Territory):

Happy New Year and welcome to 2023! Having goals for things we want to do and working towards them is an important part of being human. The path towards our goals may not always run smoothly or be easy, but having goals, whether big or small, is part of what makes life good. It gives us a sense of meaning and purpose, points us in the direction we want to go and gets us interested and engaged, all of which are good for our overall happiness.

How to Start

1. **Decide.** Think of something you want to do or work towards. It doesn't matter what, as long as it's something you want to do - ideally something you're interested in or feel excited by. It should be something you want to do for you, not for something or someone else. It can be a big thing or a small thing.
2. **Write it down.** Carefully. Writing down our goals increases our chances of sticking with them. Write down how you will know you have reached your goals and when you'd like to have achieved it by. Ask yourself: what it will 'look' like and how will you feel when you've done it? How does it connect to who or what you value in your life?
3. **Tell someone.** Telling someone we know about our goals also seems to increase the likelihood that we will stick at them.
4. **Break your goal down.** This is especially important for big goals. Think about the smaller goals that are steps on the way to achieving your bigger aim. Sometimes our big goals are a bit vague, like 'I want to be healthier'. Breaking these down helps us be more specific. So a smaller goal might be 'go running regularly' or even 'to be able to run around the park in 20 minutes without stopping'. Write down your smaller goals and try to set some dates to do these too. Having several smaller goals makes each of them a bit easier and gives us a feeling of success along the way, which also makes it more likely that we'll stay on track towards our bigger goal.
5. **Plan your first step.** An ancient Chinese proverb says that the journey of 1000 miles starts with one step. Even if your goal isn't to walk 1000 miles, thinking about the first step on the way will really help to get you started. Even if you don't know where to start there's no excuse - your first step could be to research 'how to...' on the internet or think of people you could ask or to get a book on the subject from the library. Then think of your next step...and the next...
6. **Keep going.** Working towards our goals can sometimes be difficult and frustrating - so we need to persevere. If a step you're doing isn't working, think of something else you could try that still moves you forward, even a tiny bit. If you're struggling, ask people you know for their ideas on what you could do. They may help you see a different way. Thinking about different ways of reaching our goals makes it more likely we'll be successful.
7. **Celebrate.** When you reach your goal, take time to enjoy it and thank those that helped you. Think about what you enjoyed and learned along the way.

Good luck on your personal journey to reaching the goals you set for yourself. We will see you next month!

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